

March 23, 1999

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY—178  
YEARS OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 23, 1999*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues and the people of Illinois' 9th Congressional District to celebrate the 178th year of Greek independence.

Much like the United States, Greece's independence did not come easily. Greece had to struggle for several years in its battle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. The perseverance that ultimately led to freedom for Greece is a symbol of the solid character of her people.

I am happy to commemorate the independence of a nation that has contributed so much to the inception and development of the United States.

Our Founding Fathers drew significantly on the democratic principles of the ancient Greeks, and our representative government is an extension of their philosophy, values, and wisdom. Their contributions have translated into an invaluable gift to the United States and other nations around the world, which enjoy the benefits of a democratic society.

Today we celebrate Greek independence and those of Greek heritage who are living in the United States. They have brought so much flavor and beauty to our country.

In my district, the beauty of Greek culture is not hard to find. It can be seen in the work of artists, felt in the drama of the theater, and tasted in the many Greek delicacies that Americans have grown so fond of.

Greece has been a steadfast ally to the United States since the last century. As we approach the 21st century, I look forward to our nations' continuing cooperation and our peoples' lasting friendship. Once again, I wish to congratulate the people of Greece and all Greek-Americans on this special day.

TRIBUTE TO LAGUNA WOODS,  
CALIFORNIA

**HON. CHRISTOPHER COX**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 23, 1999*

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of the retired citizens of the newly founded city of Laguna Woods, formerly known as Leisure World of Laguna Hills, CA.

As California's 472nd city, Laguna Woods represents the Nation's first city designed exclusively for retired homeowners.

Laguna Woods is a 3.2-square-mile senior community that lies adjacent to Laguna Hills in what are now the last remaining natural coastal canyons open to the public from Los Angeles to San Diego. With nearly 35,000 trees growing within the city, it is appropriate that Laguna Woods has already been titled "one of the jewels of Orange County."

The tireless efforts made by the citizens and homeowners' association of Laguna Woods are to be commended. March 24, 1999 will

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

serve to remind us of the beginning of a community that will benefit retired homeowners and communities throughout our nation. It is my distinct honor to congratulate the citizens of Laguna Woods and to welcome them as California's next great city.

FORTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF  
TUNISIAN INDEPENDENCE

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 23, 1999*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, Saturday, March 20, 1999, was the forty-third anniversary of independence of the Republic of Tunisia. With increasingly strong ties between our two governments, the American people congratulate the people of Tunisia on this historic anniversary. For the last forty-three years, Tunisia has been a model of economic growth and the advancement of women in society.

It may be difficult for many Americans to appreciate Tunisia's situation. Its only two neighbors are Algeria, which has been racked by civil war for several years, and Libya, whose dictator has supported the most nefarious and subversive kinds of terrorism. Mr. Speaker, this is not a good neighborhood.

Nevertheless, Tunisia has maintained internal stability—not without its own controversies—in the face of external chaos. At the same time, years of hard work have produced one of the highest standards of living in the region. Tunisia is one of the few countries to graduate successfully from development assistance and join the developed world. For these accomplishments, Tunisia should be applauded and supported.

In 1956, the United States was the first great power to recognize the independence of Tunisia. Upon receiving Ambassador Mongi Slim, President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "At the dawn of a new era in the history of Tunisia, we ask you to consider us as friends and partners."

Mr. Speaker, in commemoration of 43 years of independence for Tunisia, I urge my colleagues reflect on our strong commitment to Tunisian people, who are still our friends and partners in North Africa.

THE MORRIS K. UDALL  
WILDERNESS ACT

**HON. BRUCE F. VENTO**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 23, 1999*

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I once again stand before Congress to introduce the "Morris K. Udall Wilderness Act." This bipartisan legislation truly shows that both Democrats and Republicans alike can come together and work on the important conservation issues facing Congress today and strive to preserve America's last great frontier, the 1.5 million acre coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Although the introduction of the Morris K. Udall Wilderness Act brings anticipation for the

year to come, it is not a cause to celebrate for tomorrow marks the ten year anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Ten years did not heal the wounds inflicted on Prince William Sound, and neither did it lessen our memory of this terrible event. Yet a decade later, despite the lessons that should have been learned, powerful, special interests seek to plunder this wilderness, and threaten the existence of an entire ecosystem for oil that will yield no return at today's oil prices.

Thanks to the late Chairman Mo Udall's perseverance and dedication to the environment, the Arctic Refuge has been spared from the oil companies and the scarring effects of oil and gas exploration. We must remain united and continue his legacy to fight for the permanent preservation of the Arctic Refuge's coastal plain. Preventing the exploitation of the coastal plain is one of many solutions that can be employed today to protect Alaska's natural beauty and to prevent another tragedy similar to the one that occurred in Prince William Sound ten years ago. The exploitation of the coastal plain's virgin land threatens the existence of a 1,000 generation old culture, the Gwich'in of Northeast Alaska who rely on the 150,000 strong Porcupine Caribou herd—one of the world's largest and North America's last free roaming herd. The displacement of this herd as result of oil exploration and development could throw nature's delicate balance into a tailspin. Bringing this balance to equilibrium is further complicated because of the extremely long recovery period of the Arctic. In addition to the Porcupine Caribou, the Arctic Refuge is home to more than 200 species of wildlife ranging from muskoxen to polar bears. If we destroy a species, it could send a shockwave through the entire ecosystem and impact every species in its footprint—a devastating biological echo.

The United States, as a world leader in preserving lands of significant and symbolic value, cannot let this sort of degradation occur to its land or wildlife. We have only one chance to save the beauty of this natural landscape, the crown jewel of America's wilderness system, for generations of younger Americans. Once it is gone, it is gone forever—nature can never truly recover from such adverse actions visited upon its fabric, an attack upon the scope and breadth of life that, for now, call this place home.

THE POISON CONTROL CENTER EN-  
HANCEMENT AND AWARENESS  
ACT OF 1999

**HON. FRED UPTON**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 23, 1999*

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleague Representative ED TOWNS in introducing the "Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act." I am also pleased to note that Rep. BILIRAKIS, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, which has jurisdiction, is an original cosponsor of this bipartisan bill.

Poison control centers provide vital, very cost-effective services to the American public.

5389